



BILL RICHARDSON
GOVERNOR

State of New Mexico
ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT
Office of the Secretary
Harold Runnels Building
1190 St. Francis Drive, P.O. Box 26110
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502-6110
Telephone (505) 827-2855
Fax (505) 827-2836



RON CURRY
SECRETARY

DERRITH WATCHMAN-MOORE
DEPUTY SECRETARY

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Contact: Jon Goldstein, NMED Communications Director
Phone: (505) 827-0314

Environment Department Leaders Meet With Activists to Discuss Environmental, Economic Justice

(Santa Fe, NM) — The leaders of the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) met on Monday with representatives from several environmental activist groups to discuss issues of economic and environmental justice in New Mexico. The meeting was one of a series Environment Secretary Ron Curry and Deputy Secretary Derrith Watchman-Moore have conducted since taking office to reach out to the environmental community and attempt to find ways to connect on issues of shared importance.

“Business interests, community activists, all the people of New Mexico meet in one place, that’s the environment,” said Secretary Curry. “NMED needs to look at issues of environmental justice--why pollution-creating facilities are too often put in poor, minority communities—as well as economic justice. Every New Mexican deserves clean air, safe water and the opportunity to work for a decent wage. NMED promotes economic development and protection of our state’s resources.

“NMED does not believe in self-regulation,” Secretary Curry continued. “We will enforce the environmental laws that are on the books. This protects the public and helps the businesses themselves which have to disclose their environmental ‘report card’ either to shareholders or lending institutions.”

The meeting included representatives of the Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice, Southwest Organizing Project, Sacred Alliances for Grassroots Equality, Concerned Citizens of Wagon Mound and Kalpulli Izkalli.

“This is the first time in several administrations that we haven’t had to stage a sit-in to get a meeting with a new NMED Secretary,” said Richard Moore, Executive Director of the Southwest Network. “We are happy with Secretary Curry’s open door policy toward the environmental community. We know we won’t always agree with NMED’s decisions, but we hope to find common ground on more issues than not.”

For further information, contact Jon Goldstein, Communications Director, NMED at (505) 827-0314.

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